

Getting Ready for the Colonoscopy Screening Clinic

Patient Name: _____

Date of Test: _____

- **Be at the hospital 1/2 hour before your procedure.**
- **You will be at the hospital about 2 hours in total.**

**Place: St. Joseph's Hospital, 50 Charlton Avenue East
Hamilton, Ontario
Endoscopy Unit, 3rd Floor, Mary Grace Building
Room G333**

- **If you are not able to keep this appointment or have any questions call the booking office at 905-522-1155 x 34983.**
- **To change or cancel an appointment, please call at least 3 business days in advance.**

What is a colonoscopy?

A colonoscopy is a procedure that looks at the lining of the lower digestive tract. This includes the rectum and large bowel or colon. While a colonoscopy may not detect all polyps or cancer in the colon, studies have shown that it is a very good test. You can also talk to your doctor about more options.

Just before the procedure, you will have medication to make you sleep. The medication is put into a thin tube in a vein in your arm called an IV.

The doctor then looks inside using a thin video camera and tube called a scope. Pictures are sent to a television monitor as the scope goes in and moves along the bowel. During the procedure the doctor may take a small sample of tissue for testing. This is called a biopsy.

During the procedure the doctor may also remove one or more polyps. Polyps are small growths of tissue found on the mucous lining of the bowel. Colon cancer can develop from some polyps.

What are the risks of this procedure?

The risks for having a colonoscopy are:

- **Bleeding** may occur from a biopsy site. This happens less than 1 time in 1,000 procedures. Bleeding may occur when a polyp is removed about 2% of the time. Most of the time bleeding stops on its own.
- **Perforation** or injury to the lining of the bowel by an instrument could result in leaking of digestive products into body cavities. If this occurs, surgery to repair the injury may be needed. This happens less than 1 time in 1,000 procedures.
- **Other risks** include, but are not limited to, local irritation of the vein where the medication was injected, an allergic reaction to the medication used, aspiration of saliva or stomach contents, infection or fever that requires antibiotics, or a complication from a pre-existing medical condition such as heart or lung disease or diabetes.
- **Major complications** are rare, but may require hospitalization, and include injury, heart attack or death.

How do I get ready for this test?

Check with your doctor, but normally 7 days before the test . . .

- Stop all blood thinning medications if you take them. This includes Aspirin and Plavix.** If you have questions about any medications you take, call your doctor or the Endoscopy Unit.
- Fill the colonoscopy preparation prescription the doctor gave you at your pharmacy.** You will be getting:
 - 4 Bisacodyl or Ducolax tablets
 - 1 bottle of Prep drink

1 day before the test . . .

Follow the steps on the next page.

Remember: Clear fluids are anything you can see through such as water, clear soup broths, apple juice, ginger ale, clear jello (not red or purple) and banana flavoured popsicles. **Do not have milk, ice cream, creamed soups, or milkshakes.**

Follow your doctor's instructions about taking oral diabetes medication or insulin on morning of your test. Call your doctor in advance for advice.

Follow your doctor's instructions. You can call your doctor as well to get instructions. Here are some general guidelines to follow:

1. Eat a regular breakfast.
2. Some doctors let you eat a regular lunch at 12:00 noon, while some do not want you to eat any solid food after breakfast.
3. At 4:00 pm noon take 2 Bisacodyl or Ducolax tablets by mouth.
4. After taking the tablets, begin drinking the Prep drink:
 - Drink one 8-ounce glass or 240 ml of Prep drink then rest for 10 minutes. Keep doing this until you have had 6 glasses of the Prep drink in about 1 hour. You may have mild nausea or a full feeling after you start to drink the Prep drink. After about 1 hour, you will begin to have loose watery bowel movements.
5. After you have had about ½ of the Prep drink, take 2 more Bisacodyl or Dulcolax tablets.
6. Keep drinking the Prep drink every 10 to 20 minutes until it is all gone.
7. After midnight you can drink clear fluids (8 ounces or 500 ml only) up to 6 hours before your procedure.
8. You can take your regular morning medications with a sip of water.

You may want to wear protection for the loose stools that you will have. Talk to someone at your pharmacy for help with these products.

Coming to the hospital on the day of your procedure

Bring all health insurance information to the hospital such as:

- Ontario Health Insurance card **and**
- Any other health insurance papers such as Blue Cross, Metropolitan **and**
- a list of the current medications you take
- Your driver can drop you off at the Charlton Avenue entrance and you can walk to the unit. Ask any staff for directions.
- You can park in the Visitors Parking off James Street South and then walk to the unit. Ask any staff for directions.
- Parking off Charlton Avenue is very expensive so avoid this lot.

If English is not your first language, please bring one person who can interpret for you.

What happens in the Endoscopy Department?

The doctor will ask you to sign a consent form. Please ask your questions before you sign.

A nurse will always be with you. You will take off your glasses and lie on your left side. The doctor will start your sedation by putting a medication into the IV. The medication begins to work right away.

The doctor will begin by doing a finger exam in your rectum wearing a glove. The scope is then put into the rectum (or stoma if you have one). You may feel pressure as the scope goes in. You may feel as if you have to have a bowel movement, but do not worry. The doctor will put some air into the bowel to see clearly. You may feel pressure, bloating or cramping. Feel free to pass gas anytime.

If you feel you need more sedation, tell the nurse. Some people sleep through the procedure and do not remember anything after.

As the scope is moved around, you may be moved onto your back or right side for the doctor to see. The scope is taken out when the doctor is done.

After the Procedure

- You will go to the recovery area until you are fully awake – about 30 to 45 minutes. The nurses check your blood pressure, heart rate, oxygen and breathing to make sure you are alright.
- You may feel full or have cramps from the gas. Let this gas pass and try not to hold it in.
- You are given a drink. When you can drink with no problems, the IV tube is taken out.
- Your nurse will tell you when you can go home. You are given an instruction sheet to follow at home. You should rest for the day.
- You will need to arrange someone to drive you home after the procedure.

Missing or canceling an appointment

- **Missing or canceling your appointment too late** is unfair to people on the urgent waiting list. Please give **3-business days** notice for a change. If you do not give 3 business days notice, you may be charged \$150.00. This is not covered by OHIP. Thank you for your cooperation.
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